

The State University

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THE STATE UNIVERSITY.

As one of the objects of the ANNALS (as by standing announcement on its cover has been made known to its readers for years) is to publish such historical facts as relate to "the origin, growth, and development of the institutions of the state, with their bearing upon the various interests which have called them into existence," it may not be amiss to say a word concerning the action of the board of regents at their session, begun the 28th of June last, the first held under the law passed by the legislature last winter, "for the government of the state university."

At this meeting two very important measures were adopted by the regents — an affirmative measure abolishing the chair of history and political economy, and a negative measure, refusing to say yes or no to the medical department — a false conception of the late board of trustees, which was blighted *in embryo* by the act creating the board of regents. This act distinctly says, "the university shall include a collegiate, scientific, normal, law, and such other departments, with such courses of instruction and elective studies, as the board of regents may determine;" and, of course, failing to name a medical department, although its framers well knew such a department had a *quasi* existence under the old Board, it must be conceded to be suspended for the time being by the law, unless the courts shall decide that the negative action of the regents in refusing to perform a work of supererogation by declaring suspended or abolished a department which had already been set aside by the legislature, should be interpreted as establishing it — a theory exploded by a positive resolution of the regents refusing to make any appropriations themselves, and withdrawing all those already made by the preceding board to the medical department; or unless a special meeting of the board (who adjourned till next March) should be held previous to the re-opening of the university in September, to define the intent of their first action, and declare otherwise.

But it was not to discuss the propriety of the present attempt to establish, without authority of law, a medical department, which has met the all but unanimous protests of the medical profession of the state, the opposition of all the instructors in the university but two, the condemnation of the legislature itself, and the earnest remonstrances of four of the six regents recently elected by the legislature, and is supported only by the pretended medical professors themselves, and their parasites, together with those of the old board previously committed to the project; but rather to point out the inconsistent redundancy in the cast of the interloping medical faculty when compared with the merciless pruning of the collegiate department, in stripping it of a chair recognized as a necessity by nearly every college of standing in America and Europe, and one which was filled by a gentleman the longest of any associated with the university, and who, by securing to it by appropriation of a former legislature, the proceeds of the saline lands, had insured to the university one-fifth of its entire permanent fund.

A newspaper published at the seat of the university, says, in a semi-official tone, that the chair of history, which was lopped off the collegiate department by the board of regents, "was created by the last board rather as a temporary arrangement, and the time seeming to have arrived now when its labors could be distributed among the other professors and save the expense of a separate teacher, it was, by resolution, abolished as a separate chair of the institution." This explanation of the action of the Board is flatly contradicted by the official announcements of the university itself from its organization in 1856 to the present time — every chancellor or president, actual or acting — Amos Dean, Silas Totten, O. M. Spencer, N. R. Leonard, and even Dr. Black himself — proclaiming its importance; and in Totten's time it was placed only second in the list of professorships. So that this chair does not seem to have been established as a temporary one, but has been recognized and commended by every president of the university from the organization of that institution to the present time.

But in the composition of a faculty for the spurious medical department we find a redundant complement of chairs overflowing with professors, without any effort to prune down to save expense. For instance, here we have the chair of medical jurisprudence, while there are but two other medical schools in the whole Union containing such a professorship; and, again, we have the chair of obstetrics, and the chair of diseases of women and children, filled by two separate professors; while in such medical schools as Bellevue, New York, the medical department of the university of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and a dozen others that might be named, the most eminent institutions of medical learning in the country, where the professor is secured for the chair and the chair not made for the professor, we find these chairs combined. The anxious inquirer will, therefore, have to look elsewhere than to economy for the motive of the president of the university in recommending the abolishment of the important chair of history and political economy in the collegiate department, while he favors and commends the unusual and unnecessary ones referred to in the medical department.

It is but sheer justice to add that Prof. T. S. Parvin, who has been removed from his professorship in the university by the recent action of the regents, is a gentleman who has long and earnestly devoted himself to the study of history, local and general, ancient and modern, and is conceded by all to have special aptness and qualifications for the chair which has been discontinued.

MEMOIR OF COL. N. W. MILLS.

Noah Webster Mills, the fourth colonel of the second Iowa infantry, whose portrait we present as a frontispiece to this number of the ANNALS, was born in Montgomery county, Indiana, June 21st, 1834. He received his education partially

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